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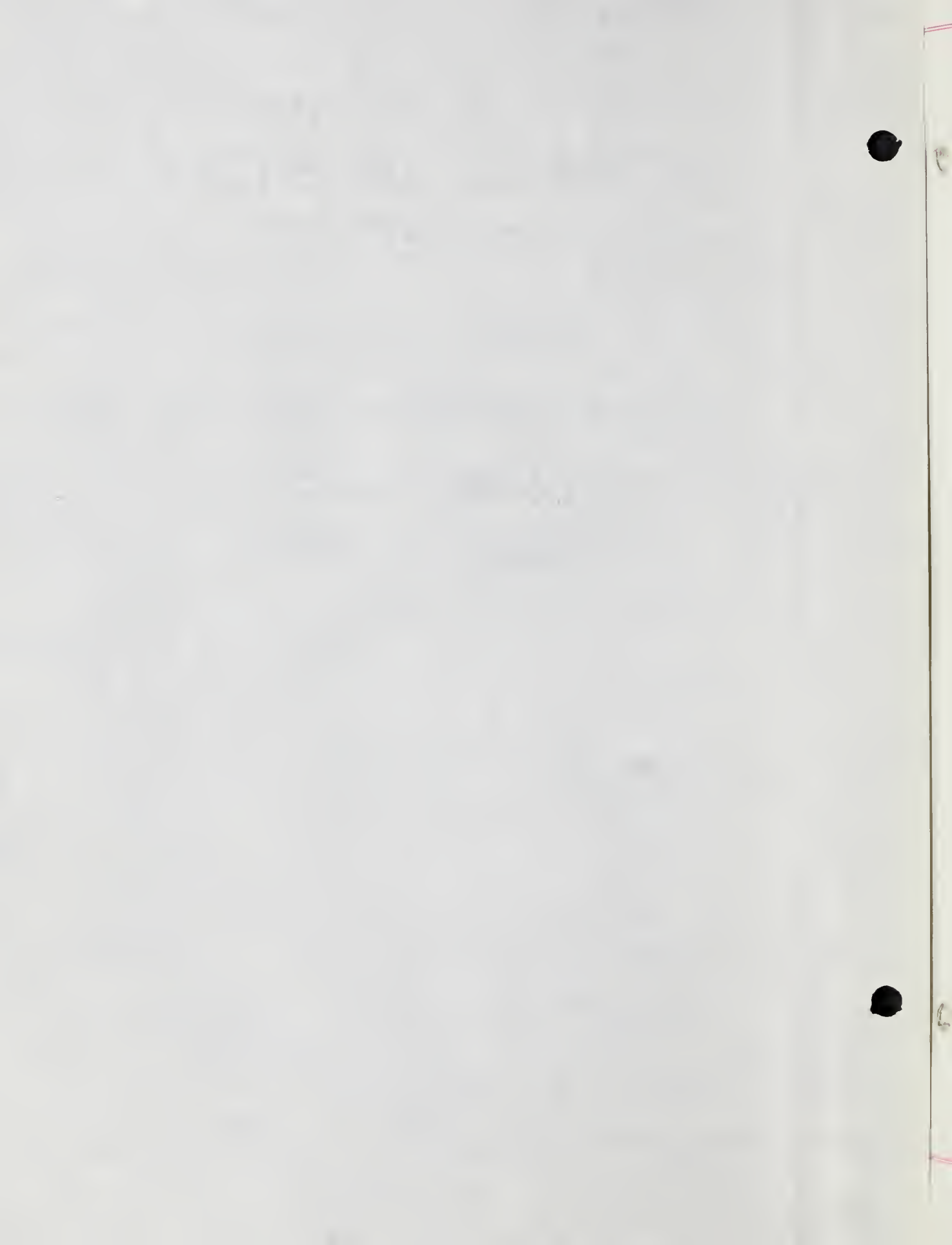
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Thesis
THE VILLAIN IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NOVEL AND DRAMA

by
Barbara Ann Kraemer
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submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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Approved
by

First Reader..... *Gerald W. Grace*
Professor of the Novel

Second Reader..... *Thomas R. Mather*
Head of the Department of English

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Section 1

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records.

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9. Further information can be found in the attached appendices.

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Introduction

I have read, I have heard, and I have said that to know the mind of the people, you must read their literature. I was convinced that man is such that although he may talk one way in public to fill his stomach or save his face or accomplish any of those trivialities so important to mortals, on paper he will express exactly opposite opinions--the opinions closest to his heart. Somehow he trusts paper, even paper blotted for publication, to keep his secret. And he seems to feel that by contradicting his life, on paper, he frees his conscience of its burden of lies. I had quotations from all sorts of men to support my opinion on this matter.

With this belief for a starting point, I determined to discover the code of morals and ethics of the Eighteenth Century in England by studying the villains in its literature. To be brief, I found I couldn't do it. I'll grant you the Eighteenth Century had its code or rather codes of ethics and morals. I'll also grant you that its literature abounded in villains. But in the main, the villains did not wear the so-called "sins" of the Eighteenth Century! They were stage props to keep the plot going. They were neon lights to draw the crowds. I'm going to show you that the villain was not real! He was a fake. Watch.

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Chapter I

The Actual Crimes and Sins of the Eighteenth Century

In this paper, I am not concerned with history. Kings came and went. Wars were won and lost. They affect my villain not at all. But there was one phase of the social history which should have been of immense importance. The Eighteenth Century was the age of the great Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions. Wheels turned. Belts moved. More cloth--more iron--more pottery--more crops--more cattle. More and more and more. Faster and faster and faster. Life in England wasn't on the march. It was on the run. Wealth grew bigger for the kingdom. And for the individual man, he who had much, earned more and prospered.

But he who had little, lost what little he had, and sank lower and lower.

The population moved to the cities, the damp, dirty cities. It lived in stinking, slimy rooms, five, six, and seven in a room with no bed and no fire and little to eat. That did not matter very much. They weren't in the rooms much. They were in factories twelve and fourteen hours a day from the moment they were old enough to stand and take orders. That is four years of age, you know. At four, if you didn't work, you didn't eat. A man's wages couldn't support more than himself. They couldn't really support himself; but he stayed alive--somehow. On Sundays, he got drunk. So

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did his wife and his children. Why not? What was there better to do? Besides, maybe the liquor killed some of the germs which were attacking him all the time. It either killed the germs or him. A good thing either way.

The prisons were overcrowded. Men and women were jammed into the same room. For the most part, prisons were filled with paupers. When the minority held all the money, it was easy for the majority to get in debt. And once you were in prison, it was no easy matter to get out. You were loaded down with fees---fees to get food or a blanket or tobacco---fees to have your chains taken off or put on---fees to keep the guard in good humor. Living in prison was expensive.

Children grew up ignorant, ill, and depraved. They knew well all the vile and criminal practices which man has thought up, before they were six years old. Stunted-stunted in mind and body and spirit; bringing forth more after their own kind.

For the most part, all of this unfair rottenness went unnoticed. But there were some who were incensed and did something about it. In 1696 John Cary put through an act which set up a corporation of the poor, a corporation which represented all the wards and parishes of the city, with a common fund permitting the founding of a workhouse for the infirm and training for employment for pauper children. He wasn't the only one. William Hay tried to bring about

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similar works elsewhere. Henry Fielding in his "Proposal... for the Poor" in 1753 advocated a county work house. Thomas Coram founded the Foundling Hospital in 1745. Oglethorpe worked on prison reform especially in behalf of the debtors. "Ragged" schools and "Sunday" schools sprang up here and there that the children might learn at least to write and read and pray.

So it isn't fair to say that the fate of the lower classes was completely ignored by the intelligent of the upper class. And there is no reason to think that the fate of the lower classes wasn't a fertile field to write about. Here was a stagnant pool, breeding terrible villains of all classes--- low, foul smelling bums committing murder, theft, kidnapping, etc.---well dressed gentlemen-of-means squeezing the life's blood from the oppressed poor. Here it was. If the men of letters had chosen to write the truth, they would have written of villains produced by the Revolutions of Industry and Agriculture.

Do not think I made up those crimes mentioned in the above paragraph. I didn't mention half enough. For instance there was a crime known as 'Fleet Street Marriages', so called because Fleet Street was one of the most popular areas for this vicious activity. Clandestine marriages performed in taverns, brandy-shops, and ale-houses ruined multitudes of honourable families. Fine young girls woke up tied by secret marriages (because their parents would never have

permitted such unions had they known) to ragues and renegades. Splendid youthful heirs, the joy of their families, were married in the same way to harlots. Here was sin. Here were villains.

Highway robbery was so common as to cause little comment. Since roads were bad, travellers went for the most part on horseback and were fair game for anyone with a pair of pistols. When the London mail coach was held up, there was quite a stir, of course, but the ordinary man considered it not extraordinary to lose his money, horse, and clothes on a journey through the woods of England. He was glad if he did not lose his life also.

Petty thievery in all cities was another everyday occurrence. The punishment was hanging. It would seem thieves didn't mind being hung. At least fear of the punishment in no way diminished the crime. House breaking and pick pocketing went on quite profitably.

Kidnapping was another successful profession. Sometimes the child was held for ransom. Sometimes it was trained in the various ways of stealing. The schools for thieves which Dickens laments in the nineteenth century were just as active in the eighteenth as Defoe shows in "Colonel Jack".

If you didn't wish to be a thief or teach thieves, you might very well be a receiver of stolen goods. Receiving stolen goods was dangerous, true. But the rewards were

worth the danger. In most cases, those who had "lost" their prized possessions were more than glad to protect the "fence" if there was a chance of redeeming the jewels or bags etc.

On the sea, there was piracy. Being a pirate was adventuresome and exciting. If you were ordinary at your trade, still you shared in the booty. If you were clever, you might become captain of a ship. You would be a little king on water. Eventually you might retire to a life of sumptuous ease and luxury.

Murder for itself alone was not overly popular. It more often accompanied theft. Killing for the sheer pleasure of killing had lost its thrill. The mob exercised its animal cruelty by haggling victims of the law as they hung on the gibbet, or cracked behind flames, or just sat patiently in the pillory. By killing for theft, I mean killing to acquire anything from a watch to an elder brother's estate. That of course happened fairly frequently.

Drunkenness is not a crime, I admit; but it is a bad habit. It can become a swinish characteristic. It is degrading. Drunkenness was one of the blackest marks on Eighteenth Century Society. It was the custom of rich and poor, noble and commoner, man and woman, adult and child. It was bad enough in itself, but that it often led to worse sins makes it even more deplorable. Those who didn't drink to excess tried to have laws passed which would put a curb on

drinking. Unfortunately, the laws weren't passed.

These, then, were just a few of the crimes or sins common to the Eighteenth Century. For the most part, they were committed by the lowest classes. Villains in literature might well have been ragged vermin-covered rogues who practiced these vices. Mightn't they?

Of course, whereas a crime is usually connected with transgressions against the laws of man, sin is connected with more often with the transgressions against the so-called laws of God. Hence a man could be innocent of committing crimes and still be a villain.

Under the laws of God comes such as "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy mind," and "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". In some ages these particular laws were considered important. But in the Eighteenth Century, religion, except for Methodism, was out of style. Therefore, disbelieving in God, not deigning to honor Him,---these were not criteria for villains.

Moral philosophy had taken the place of religion. Naturally it lacked the fervid enthusiasm which the religion used to arouse. Still it had its devoted followers

Moral philosophy was divided into three schools, roughly, with a few free-lance philosophers thrown in. There was the Intellectual School headed by Wollaston, Clarke, and Price. To them, God is the first cause of all things.

He creates morals as well as every thing else. Hence-- that comes to mean: whatever is, is right. As Hobbes put it, whatever the sovereign allows is right; whatever he forbids is wrong. That permitted a variation of moral standard according to time and place. Crime, in the hands of these intellectual ones became connected with error. To those who understood the universe and whose intellect was thoroughly developed, the wisdom of virtue would be so self-evident that crime would be impossible. It was by distorting our judgments that our passions led us into error. Sound judgment would prevent excited passions. Emotions were supposed to play absolutely no part in laying down moral laws and enforcing man's obedience to them. To sum it all up, it is not from desire for pleasure or from dread of pain that virtue comes, but from dread of showing a lack of perception of the truth. Whether the Intellectual School was right or wrong does not matter. What does matter is their conception of a villain. He would be a man who failed to live up to the laws of his society. He would be unable to exercise his mind properly. Being unable to reason and being ruled by passions and emotions, you might well consider him purely an animal.

Shaftesbury led a school of philosophy all his own. When most people do this, we ignore them as unworthy of further notice. But the teachings of Lord Shaftesbury had too wide-

spread an influence to be ignored. We see him in Pope's poetry and in Butler's theology. Tindal and Bolingbroke accepted many of his hints. Hence he was important enough for us to notice. He was one of those who taught that no cultivated person could believe the doctrines of the Church. He loathed enthusiasm as false- and fought it with ridicule. Ridicule could kill anything, he said. On the other hand, good humour was in his eyes the foundation of piety and true religion. He hated Jews. Yet for all his hates, he was an optimist. He believed that whatever is, is right. He honestly believed there could be no real ill in the universe. In re morals--he states that the man who obeys the law under threats is no better than the man who breaks it when at liberty. Morality was harmony. The love of humanity should be our ruling passion. Therefore-a villain to Shaftesbury and all his followers would be one out of the pattern with his fellow man. He would break the common peace which belonged to all while all were virtuous. He would be ill-humoured, unpleasant, jarring to society.

His first critic was Bernard de Mandeville. He believed man was naturally a base animal with ferocious passions which had to be kept in check by religion. Virtue consisted in renouncing luxury. Yet he says that by and large virtue is a fashion, changing with every mood of the crowd. It would be hard for a follower of Mandeville to create a villain because he couldn't quite believe in one. Or rather, he could

not believe in a hero. Still an author might suggest villainy in this school by allowing the wicked one to indulge in complete self-gratification of every sort. He might permit him all indulgences, all vanities, all luxuries. And again I say this wouldn't make a villain out of him necessarily, but it would prevent him from being a hero.

Still another school of moral philosophy in the Eighteenth Century was the Common-Sense School. The first in this group was Joseph Butler, a follower of Shaftesbury who inherited the feelings of his master and interprets them to us. He says that we should follow our nature, but that our nature is the voice of God in us,--in other words, our conscience. And that is the true meaning of the phrase, acting in conformity to nature. He also believed that God implanted in our nature passions to excite us against wickedness. These passions urge us towards the external things which are distinct from the pleasure which arises from them. Butler was trying to dissolve the popular idea of the time that all human actions are selfish. A Butlerian villain would fail to follow the dictates of his conscience--that, pure and simple--nothing more.

Another of the Common-Sense School and a follower of Shaftesbury, also, was Francis Hutcheson, a very happy man. To him, anything for the public was good. Anything that wasn't, was bad. Life was as simple as that for him. A villain would work against the welfare of his fellow man. No matter

what any preceding or subsequent age thought of a man's behavior, unless he was harmful to his own times, not just in their eyes, but actually, he was good.

In the Utilitarian School was Locke who among other things said moral good was conformity to some law in general and to God's law in particular. He says the 'law of God in particular' because it is the only permanent and invariable standard. The Gospel, says Locke, will tell us what God's law is--hence there is no need for him to restate it. Clearly to offend according to the Gospel would make you a Lockian villain. The Ten Commandments give place to the Beatitudes.

Next of the Utilitarians was Hume who tried to make morals scientific. Morals, he claimed, depended on experience. That which was useful was good. Virtue was sense and a feeling for humanity. Prudence should regulate action. Prudence-usefulness-experience-these then were important. A villain would act without them. He would behave like a fool. He would care nothing for his fellow man.

A third Utilitarian was Waterland who believed morality was what was conducive to the general good--was doing those things beneficial according to the principle of obedience and the love of God. Virtue was conformity to a rule of life directing action in respect to each other's happiness. This was a simple rule of life--so simple that we can well believe the breaking of it would infuriate its author to the cursing of the breaker as a most degenerate villain.

These are nearly all, and quite enough at that to show you how ran the tempo of the intellectual man's mind in reference to morality in the Eighteenth Century. They show what course a man in a novel or drama might follow to deserve the name villain--if, that is, he is to be a true villain, representing his age.

Chapter II

Possible Unpleasant Characteristics for a Real Villain

A man may have a bad character, and yet, if he lives in the upper ranks of society, it may be difficult to recognize it. If we do recognize his wickedness, we often are unwilling to admit it even to ourselves, because it doesn't seem right for a man in his circumstances to lower the prestige of his society. Noblesse oblige--and if it fails to do so we must charitably draw the veil. This last statement does not pertain to the Eighteenth Century alone, but is a universal truth of all ages. In order to force the reader to admit willingly the crimes of the villain, the author may feel he should bedeck him with the ill manners of society. I went to my Lord Chesterfield, who is the well-known Emily Post of his time, to learn what no gentleman does. My Lord in his letters to his son laid special stress on neat, fashionable dress. Clothes should always be of an excellent material and cut, but never loud or ostentatious. Wrinkled hose was a worse error than despoiling a maiden (unless one were caught in the latter act).

Next to taste in dress came gracefulness of manners. To be able to enter a room smoothly, to keep one's sword from tripping one up, to manage a teacup and a compliment--these things were the marks of a gentleman. The art of addressing women of all ages to keep them good tempered was as necessary as learning to speak correct English. Next in importance to my Lord was a list of things no gentleman did in reference to the use of the handkerchief, scratching, yawning, etc. No gentleman was so stupid as to have his sins found out. This was vital. Excess drinking, promiscuous love-making, and gambling were not sins as long as they were practiced in private. No gentleman lied because he might be found out, and his name would be ruined. No gentleman was ignorant, nor did he wear his learning like a cloak to excite envy and ridicule. The vital point was not what you were, but what others thought of you.

Turn to the opposites of these laws of actions and you have the proper costuming for a villain in Eighteenth Century literature. With such qualities, he would be boo-ed off every stage and page for a hundred years.

"The Spectator Papers", that most popular coffee shop literature of the time, specialized in a hero of a more dignified, more noble temperament. He scorned ill manners, foppishness, licentiousness of all kinds, poor disposition, hypocrisy, unkindness, and false wit. Avarice, uncleanness, drunkenness, adultery, and inconstancy of friendship were marks of a low

fellow. Those wearing these unfortunate traits would certainly be eligible for the title for villain.

Now, knowing what acts of crime the lower class was accustomed to commit as well as how wretched and foul looking that lower class was accustomed to be, and knowing not only the superficial qualities which made the upper class men undesirable to their compatriots as well as what character faults made them social outcasts, I might have a fairly definite idea as to what the villains I should meet in the Eighteenth Century novels and plays would be. I have read novels and plays which time and the general approval of man have rated as the best of their kind. Let the next few pages tell you what I discovered.

Chapter III

Announcing the Villain--or What's in a Name?

Although the names of fictional villains could in no way resemble any actual villains enough to make them realistic, and this section might well be left out in consequence, yet I include it to prove that authors and playwrights made little or no attempt to make us believe in their villains as such.

One school of writers thought best to blaze forth the character of their cast in neon lights. The other school left it up to the reader or audience to make the grand discovery all alone.

I mention the former only to give proof of a satisfactory

research into the subject. There were some playwrights who depended on type-names. It became a sort of style. You can see why---it was easy. If you call a man My Lord All-sneers, everyone will know he isn't the pleasantest sort of individual. If you call him Sly Sneakcat, everyone will hiss the first moment he comes on the stage. So when Colley Cibber in "Love's Last Shift" in 1696 sent onto the stage a chap by the name of Loveless, there was no doubt that here was a no-good sort of a fellow who would bear watching. It was also evident that his faults were in some way connected with his inability to love the right people---probably a wife or a deserving sweetheart. As a matter of fact, he was a deserting husband. The name Sir Novelty Fashion in the same play may not foretell a villain. You aren't going to throw a bag of peanut shells at him. You aren't going to faint or cling to your escort's arm when he comes on the stage; but you can be pretty sure that he is a worthless good-for-nothing who won't do much harm, but won't do much good either. Then when a fine, upstanding character like Elder Worthy has a brother called Young Worthy, it is a ten to one guess that the young one is smaller not only in years, but in virtues as well. But, and of this you are also pretty sure, being of the family of Worthy, he will probably come out all right in the end. Cibber wrote another play called "The Careless Husband" in 1704 in which he put a man by the name of Sir Charles Easy. Add the title of the play to the name of that character, and even before the curtain

has gone up, what do you know? Why--this is a man of easy virtue and probably the careless husband. His carelessness lies not so much in ignoring his wife, as ignoring her for other women. Lord Toppington of the same play reminds us of Sir Novelty Fashion. As a man he is perfectly worthless. As a tailor's dummy, he is perfection. He must dress in the height of style, talk in the height of style, and act in the height of style. Need I add that he himself decided exactly what constitutes style from the Blue Book of etiquette he and his comrades wrote in unconscious satire after Lord Chesterfield's rules? It is really just the exaggeration of good taste on the plan that if one silk bow on one's breeches looks attractive, six bows must be six times as attractive.

Cimberton in Steele's "The Conscious Lovers" doesn't give quite as much of a hint as to his character. But since Steele wrote at the time when the style was type names to fit type characters, and since there is no one else on the page who comes up to the required standards, Cimberton is naturally the villain. And once you have decided that, the rest is easy. Cimberton---roll it over your tongue. Well, you can't. It hisses. It is almost sweet. That's it, sweet. Ah ha, another coxcomb. Another of those obnoxious fancy dandies.

There are a few more of this kind, to be sure. But only a few. In the first place, eighteenth century plays are strangely lacking in really honest-to-goodness villains. There are weaklings like Barnwell in "The London Merchant".

There were catastrophes like the old couple, Agnes and Old Wilmot her husband in "The Fatal Curiosity". But somehow they don't come up to our standard of villains. A stock villain is the father of the hero or the father of the heroine who is forcing an unwanted marriage on his unhappy child. And in that case it simply would be disrespectful to give a should-be-loved parent a bad name. So Donna Louisa in "The Duenna" by Sheridan has for a cruel father Don Jerome, and who could guess anything about him from that? That is the way it goes in the drama---a few with type-names, but most of them with ordinary names.

When we come to the novel, it is practically impossible to recognize a villain from his name. Consider him whom I call the first villain of the novel, Squire B. Certainly that is a perfectly harmless name. It could belong to anyone, your brother or my father. Perhaps you, since you have read "Pamela" and know exactly what sort of person Squire B. is when you see the whole of him from beginning to end, are inclined to say that it would be silly of me to expect him to be called Snake-in-the-grass or Ami de diable. A nice girl can't marry a man with a name like that. Well then, what have you to say for Robert Lovelace in "Clarissa"? You can't say he isn't a villain of the lowest type, the most completely rotten cad that ever lived on paper. And yet does his name show it? No! Robert Lovelace---a bit of effeminate sort, perhaps; but they were growing them that way then. He sounds quite

harmless; shall we say too harmless to suit any lively girl of this generation? Shall we say not worth wasting an evening on? But what was he? A wolf in a sheep's name. Squire Thornhill in "The Vicar of Wakefield" has a pleasant name. It wouldn't frighten duennas and it wouldn't bore their young charges. He sounds like a fine young man. But was he? You know he wasn't. Signor Montoni in the "Mysteries of Udolpho" had a decent enough Italian name. You could say that his being Italian automatically makes him wicked, I suppose. But is that entirely fair? Ambrosio in the notorious "The Monk" by Lewis wore his name originally as a pious father superior. Hence it had to sound virtuous. His villainy did not spoil the name, Ambrosio, as a name. Neither Tyrrel nor Falkland in Godwin's "Caleb Williams" give themselves away with their names. Possibly there are people in England today who are proud to bear those names. Peregrine Pickle from Smollett's book of the same name is a scoundrel--but the mere sight of the words, Peregrine Pickle, make one want to laugh. So it goes. Just run your eye over this list of bad men--Sir Ulick O'Shane, Harrel, Briggs, and Blifil. You can see what I mean. The eighteenth century villain simply couldn't be recognized by his name. You can draw some conclusions from that. Evidently eighteenth century writers believed that the wicked were not of a class by themselves. They were perfectly normal people. They wore no brand nor mark of Cain. If you want to go farther you say authors realized people in the best

of families become wicked. Even you or I are not exempt. Enough of philosophizing since I doubt if our authors went into the matter so deeply. The only real point of importance is that the literary villains wore ordinary names and hence were not recognizable on the spot of introduction.

Chapter IV

How Do You Do?---or the Villain's First Appearance

I might as well admit the sad truth now and not leave you to find it out for yourself---villains were not ugly or poor or unpleasant in either the novels or the plays. The devil is a fascinating and attractive fellow, which makes him all the more devilish. But I am drawing conclusions before presenting facts. How does a villain get himself on the scene?

Look first at my chief villain, Squire B.. He managed to precipitate himself into our presence in the first scene of Volume I by being at his mother's death bed. And did he content himself with being just a mourning son sobbing quietly and bothering no one? He did not. He immediately calls our attention to himself by showing himself the unusually kind and benevolent master, interested only in carrying out his mother's wishes and doing good works. Pamela tells us all about it in a happy letter home:

"Well, but God's will must be done! And so comes the comfort, that I shall not be obliged to return back to be a clog upon my dear parents! For my master said, 'I will take care of you all, my good maidens. And for you, Pamela,'

(and took me by the hand; yes, he took my hand before them all,) 'for my dear mother's sake, I will be a friend to you, and you shall take care of my linen.' God bless him! and pray with me, my dear father and mother, for a blessing upon him; for he has given me mourning and a year's wages to all my lady's servants, and I having no wages as yet (my Lady having said she would do for me as I deserved,) he ordered the housekeeper to give me mourning with the rest; and gave me with his own hand four golden guineas, and some silver, which were in my old lady's pocket when she died; and said, if I was a good girl, and faithful and diligent, he would be friend to me for his mother's sake." 1.

So much for Squire B., the wicked man in Pamela's life. So are all the best villains, gay deceivers with virtuous faces. Let's see another one. And to be consistent, we'll take another squire. This time it is Squire Thornhill of "The Vicar of Wakefield". He came in no more quietly than Squire B. or rather he came in much more vigorously and actively. To do him justice, he made no such virtuous pretenses as Squire B. He loved the fair sex and made no attempt to hide that fact.

"The huntsman who rode foremost passed us with great swiftness, followed by four or five persons more, who seemed in equal haste. At last a young gentleman of more genteel appearance than the rest came forward, and for a while regarding us, instead of pursuing the chase, stopped short, and giving his horse to a servant who attended, approached us with a careless, superior air. He seemed to want no introduction, but was going to salute my daughters as one certainly of a kind reception; but they had early learned the lesson of looking presumption out of countenance, upon which he let us know his name was Thornhill, and that he was owner of the estate that lay for some extent around us. He again, therefore, offered to salute the female part of the family, and such was the power of fortune and fine clothes that he found no second repulse." 2.

Now you don't see him and now you do. Now you have only heard of him as your landlord, and now he is the old and

1. Samuel Richardson, "Pamela" (New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914) p. 1
 2. Oliver Goldsmith, "The Vicar of Wakefield", (New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1908) p. 24

familiar friend of the family. Certainly these villains make no attempt to hide under cover. Sir Hargrave Pollexfen boldly presented himself at a dinner party as calmly as any pride of a mother's heart might. And well he might seem to be some mother's pride, for certainly he cut a pretty figure in excellent society.

"This was the company, and all the company, besides us that Lady Betty expected. But mutual civilities had hardly passed, when Lady Betty, having been called out, returned, introducing, as a gentleman who would be acceptable to every one, Sir Hargrave Pollexfen. 'He is,' whispered she to me, as he saluted the rest of the company in a very gallant manner, 'a young baronet of a very large estate; the greatest part of which has lately come to him by the death of a grandmother, and two uncles, all very rich.'

"When we were presented to each other, he paid me some compliments, and then said,--'Much did I hear, when I was at the last Northampton races, of Miss Byron; but little did I expect to find report fall so short of what I see.'

"The baronet then excusing himself to Lady Betty, assured her that she must place this his bold intrusion to the account of Miss Byron, he having been told she was to be there."

Now did you ever witness a more respectable and captivating entrance? Wouldn't you think that surely this was a fine young man and worth cultivating? There is no reason for not. He enters your house in a most quiet, well bred fashion.

Fanny Burney made an excellent society villain in her "Evelina" in the form of Sir Clement Willoughby. He was to harrass the sensitive Evelina almost beyond endurance with his ill-mannered attentions and pursuit. Yet we meet him at an Assembly where only the finest people go. There he dances and compliments along with the more sober, but not the more

socially accepted, hero, Lord Orville.

Look next at an Italian villain. Do you think someone from a novel of terror will come dashing, teeth gnashing in? Do you think he at least we can expect to announce himself in the correct manner by knocking a few innocent babies' heads together? I quote you a bit from Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho", as thrilling a Gothic tale as ever came out of a nightmare. Signor Montoni is the villain.

"When the company arrived, Emily entered the saloon with an air of timidity which all her efforts could not overcome,among whom she distinguished Signor Montoni and his friend Cavigni, the late visitors at M. Quesnel's; who now seemed to converse with Madame Cheron with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, and she to attend them with particular pleasure."

Once again we are let down. The villain enters like anyone else, at a tea party, no less. The days of Beowulf are over when you could hear the villain, see the villain, practically smell the villain on first introduction. He didn't sneak up on you like a fever as these eighteenth century villains did. These villains are completely camouflaged in kid glove situations. Manfred is the sire in Horace Walpole's "Castle of Otranto". We are led to feel at the first that he is fond of his own way when he hastens his son's wedding, out some stubbornness, some love of showing authority was not uncommon in parents in those days; so we were little worried.

1. Ann Radcliffe, "The Mysteries of Udolpho", (London, Geo. Routledge & Sons) p.61

Captain Singleton from the novel of the same name is villain as well as hero of his own novel, since he is the only really important person in it and is certainly no knight in shining armor at that. He comes to us in the harmless version of a poor little lad stolen from his wealthy parents. It is just the situation to win our sympathies rather than our revulsion. Speaking of villains who win our sympathies, I am reminded of that combination hero-villain in the play "The London Merchant". He appears in the first place as a shy, good stripling and so he is--then. It seems he has met a female devil who has invited him to her home. He had not the sense to refuse her, and so he came. The devil, Millwood, speaks of him thus:

"..therefore we can take advantage only of the young and innocent part of the sex; who, having never injured women, apprehend no injury from them.....Such a one, I think I have found. As I've passed through the city, I have often observed him receiving and paying considerable sums of money; from thence I conclude he is employed in affairs of consequence.....If I manage well, I shall have done him much sooner. Having long had a design on him, and meeting him yesterday, I made a full stop, and gazing wistfully on his face, asked him his name. He blushed; and bowing very low, answered, George Barnwell. I begged his pardon for the freedom I had taken, and told him that he was the very person I had long wished to see, and to whom I had an affair of importance to communicate at a proper time and place. He named a tavern; I talked of honour and reputation, and invited him to my house. He swallowed the bait, promised to come, and this is the time I expect him. Somebody knocks." "

Probably in no way do we get a better picture of him than in those words. Young George is all too evidently a polite and

George Lillo, "The London Merchant", Act I, Scene III

well intentioned idiot who doesn't know what it is all about, and if he did know, he wouldn't know how to avoid it. It would not occur to him to question a young woman's advances. I talk as if he were a victim, and my thesis is about villains. True but this lad is both victim and villain. You can't say he would not have been a villain if he hadn't met Millwood. If he hadn't met Millwood, he would have met someone else or something else. And he would have met it shyly blushing and bowing. He would have walked onto the stage stupidly blundering, led by his own weaknesses, and making us feel sorry for him because of his innocence.

There is another villain who wins our sympathy. I should say pair of villains because it is wife, Agnes, who is the instigation of the crime, but I am dealing only with masculine villains. They are the old folks in Lillo's "The Fatal Curiosity". There is some reason in this since both this and the aforementioned play are by the same author. In this one, we see poor old Wilmot bewailing the bitterness that life has brought him, poverty, and the loss of a son. This is another time when the audience feels nothing but pity for the old man. You want to help him. You declare it isn't fair. It is a perfect opening for an aged hero. Or it is a good chance for a young hero to build himself up. As it is, none of these things are going to happen. This old man is going to turn into a cruel---but that is part of another chapter.

Addison wrote a noble tragedy titled "Cato" in which one

Sempronius is the black-hearted one. This time, at least, the villain says the sort of thing you would expect him to if only to himself as Sempronius does in his first scene.

"Conspiracies no sooner should be formed
Than executed. What means Portius here?
I like not that cold youth. I must dissemble,
And speak a language foreign to my heart."¹

a minute later he says:

"Godd morrow, Portius; let us once embrace,
Once more embrace, while yet we both are free.
To-morrow, should we thus express our friendship,
Each might receive a slave into his arms."²

That is more like it. The villain comes in with one idea in his mind and another on his lips. He is immediately a dissembler, a liar, a hypocrite. You know you can't trust him. Young Portius had best not trust him either. And even if Young Portius does not know this, we do, and feel the better for it. Matters are on such a ground that we can understand them.

There now, we have looked at some eight different villains. That they all are villains, I realize you must take my word for it. You have little reason to believe me. You have no way of checking up unless you read the whole novels and plays from which these characters are taken. That is the point I am trying to make. Villains not only have names as harmless as the heroes. They also appear in just the situations that heroes do. There is nothing terrifying about their first

¹Joseph Addison, "Cato", Act I, Scene II

²Loc. Cit.

appearances. There is nothing startling about the places where they appear. A villain sobs at his mother's death bed and then magnanimously offers to care for all her servants as she would wish. A villain rides up during a hunt, and after admitting his position as landlord, makes himself one of the family. A villain rides up during a dinner party, and makes the most harmless remarks imaginable, quite pleasant and in accord with the best of good taste. A villain is a harmless, polite boy, or a heart broken old father. In fact he is almost anything ordinary and imaginable. It is no wonder that he is accepted by both his readers or audience and his compatriots in the novel or play.

Shall we philosophize again? Villains appear in the most respectable situations. The most respectable acting people may be villains.

Perhaps you think I am going to find that these villains are horrid looking creatures. I am afraid I can not. So far, they are so commonplace that you know their features and dress are going to be ordinary, too, or else they will be superior to every one else's.

Let's look at young George Barnwell again. It is Lucy, Millwood's maid, who sums him up as "Innocent, handsome, and about eighteen." Little more could be said in favor of a boy's looks than that. Handsome and about eighteen--what more could you ask? What more could captivate the heart of a roving miss? What is less like wickedness and sin? Nothing,

nothing, and nothing. Or consider the foreigner, Signor Montoni created by Mrs.Radcliffe. She tells us that this arch-roguer was fascinating in his way.

"This Signor Montoni had an air of conscious superiority, animated by spirit and strengthened by talents, to which every person seemed involuntarily to yield. The quickness of his perceptions was strikingly expressed on his countenance; yet that countenance would submit implicitly to occasion; and more than once in this day to triumph of art over nature might have been discerned in it. His visage was long, and rather narrow; yet he was called handsome; and it was, perhaps, the spirit and vigour of his soul, sparkling through his features, that triumphed for him. Emily felt admiration,.."

Ah, here at last is something which we can put a finger on. Here is a finger pointing to the calamity of the future. Here is a premonition. And yet, even in this case, we have to admit that the man could be called handsome. Even this embryonic Gothic terror has the physiognomical ability to win some women. Even he can not have his true character written all over his face. Even he can not repulse us.

Do you remember Sir Hargrave Pollexfen? He was one of those we met at a dinner-party. Miss Byron describes him:

"Sir Hargrave Pollexfen is handsome and genteel; pretty tall, about twenty-eight or thirty. His complexion is a little of the fairest for a man, and a little of the palest. He has remarkably bold eyes, rather approaching to what we would call goggling; and he gives himself airs with them. Lady Betty, on his back being turned, praising his person, said Sir Hargrave had the finest eyes she ever saw in a man." 2.

He sounds like the kind of a man you would want to lead you in the Junior Prom, or take you to the Moonlight Sail. He sounds

Ann Radcliffe, "The Mysteries of Udolpho" (London, Geo. Routledge & Sons) p.61, 62
Samuel Richardson, "The History of Sir Charles Grandison", (London, Geo.Routledge & Sons, Abridged Edition by M.Howitt) P.14

like any co-ed's dream. The eyes wouldn't be considered a liability if they only goggled at you yourself.

Naturally Squire Thornhill had exceptional good looks. He had ways to win both the Vicar's wife and her pretty daughter, Olivia. They considered him handsome of feature, smooth of dress, and thoroughly captivating. They set their caps and garnished their dress. He looked to them the answer to their prayers, salvation from poverty, all life's goodness done up in a pretty cellophane wrapper. Another case of skullduggery veiled in a golden mist.

As for Pamela's Squire B., no one who has read her letters to her parents describing him can deny that he must have been of unusual physical charm. Even those to us rather silly chaps Sir Novelty Fashion and Lord Foppington had captivating looks. Even Lovelace and Sir Charles Easy were of such appearance that women were unable to resist them.

I hope I have caused you to understand that all of these villains are men of means as well as of middling to superior good looks. Not one of them ever suffers from ordinary garb, and certainly they do not ever go in tatters. Of course Lovelace was down to his last shilling, but that didn't mean he was down to his last rag. Poverty looked well on him. And as for the rest, they all were models of fashion with gold guineas jingling in their pockets. Are you not a bit intrigued? Wouldn't you expect the villain to wear nasty scars and greasy clothes and matted hair? Shouldn't the sight

of him cause maidens to faint and heroes to swear and babies to cry? Shouldn't he have to wonder where his next meal was coming from? Shouldn't the word, bath, be foreign to his ears? (Maybe it was, but that was the fault of the age not of the villain.) You have to admit that all these things you would expect to be under any circumstances as in any age. But in this age, since he could be of that rotten breed of the city slums, you might rightfully demand it. Of course he might be a gentleman scoundrel; yet even a gentleman scoundrel has his characteristics. In the Eighteenth Century you certainly would expect him to trip over his hose, lose a garter, and wear a soiled coat. He should insult the ladies, scratch his leg, and hiccup disgustingly. These things would make him instantly hatable. However, every sign points to a direct opposite of facts. Those villains were gentlemen from "Esquire", faultlessly turned out. There was nothing about them to make even the most cautious suspicious.

You might say that crime doesn't show on one's face. You might say that nature takes no toll on the lowly of heart. Behind your handsome smirk may lurk a black heart. Under those golden locks a foul mind is scheming. What looks like a smile is really a sneer. All that glitters is not gold. This could go on indefinitely. Or you might say that the authors and playwrights did not choose to make their villains obnoxious. They wanted to make them pleasant and attractive. Why? --because the novel of the Eighteenth Century was not

held in high repute. It was not yet respectable. Hence its appeal had to be heightened to make it sell. That is why the authors liked to make crime attractive and all the more beguiling.

Chapter V

Sua Culpa or the Things He Ought Not to Have Done

The man is before us. We know he is bad, or rather you are taking my word for it that he is bad; and you are wondering what he has done that I should condemn him. I shall produce the evidence.

Let us start with my favorite once more, Squire B. from "Pamela". You will remember that Squire B. was left in charge of his mother's house when she died. On her death bed, her last words were, "remember my poor Pamela". So the dutiful son took his mother a bit too seriously and never let Pamela out of his mind for a minute. His first act is to give her money (from his mother's pocket, of course) to recompense her for her good work that year. His next act is to keep her in his house rather than send her to his sister's house where she might have trouble with his sister's son. From then on, the lad grows kinder. He gives her personal clothes, comforts her by taking her hand when he finds her unhappy, and so on until he feels, one day in the summer house, that he should receive a little comforting, too. When a man is depressed, a soft kiss, a gentle embrace will pick up him better than a brandy. After poor Pamela had lain in his arms for a few

minutes, she realized that her actions weren't following her parents' teachings, and she flew into the house to weep. He went away for a while, but when he came back, he was even worse, going so far as to catching her in the hallways. He made his contriving old housekeeper believe that his intentions were all for the best. He stormed and raged at Pamela for her sauciness and her cruelty and her lack of respect to her elders. He threatened to throw her out, and he told her she might never go. He dressed up in maid's clothes to catch sight of her unclothed on her way to bed; but to do him justice when she fainted at his leaping upon her in bed, he was really distressed and annoyed her no more that night. He hid in her closet and tried to catch her that way. Of course she always managed to elude him, ---due either to her good fortune or to his hidden soft streaks. I don't know. He had her kidnapped and kept by a foul bawd for such a time until the unhappy girl should "come to ner Senses". In other words, he committed all the crimes against a woman's virtue and sanity that he could---except one. There was no doubt that he was a villain in any generation for he was attempting to commit what has been technically known as sin from days of the Bible on. And if he did not actually ruin Pamela, it's a wonder he didn't scare her to death. (I think he would an ordinary decent girl who wasn't bartering for a wedding ring in any way she could.)

Clarissa from the novel "Clarissa" suffered a much worse

fate. Clarissa was pursued by a man who wanted not only her charms for himself, but also wanted revenge on her. She suffered in the first place from domestic trouble. Her own family was cruel to her and intended to give her to a man she abhorred. Robert Lovelace offered to conduct her to safety as one of his female relatives, persuaded her, in fact, that it was her only chance of salvation, and then stole away with her to his own home. There was a time when he wanted to marry her. To do him justice, I tell you that he intended in the very end to marry her. But his baseness led him first to rape her, thinking that would make her beg him to make an honest woman of her. He wanted to see her grovel. She wouldn't grovel. And she wouldn't marry him. She said she would die first. And she did. Compared to Lovelace, Squire

B. was a pure, white lamb. The Squire raged and tricked and threatened and made advances. But that is as far as he ever got. Robert Lovelace made up his mind to wrong her, to make her unhappy, to break her spirit, even thought he had to admit he loved her deep down inside as he really did. One would almost think that Squire B. had read a book, "How to be a Villain in Ten Easy Lessons" and that Robert Lovelace had written the book. Or perhaps the Squire took a correspondence course on the subject and never got as far as earning his certificate; while Robert was Dean of the School which gave the course. I am trifling with words and your time. But

perhaps my flights of fancy have shown you these two villains rather clearly.

Of the same social standing is Squire Thornhill of "The Vicar of Wakefield". The landlord of the Vicar had an eye for pretty girls, but he didn't want to be tied down to any particular one permanently. The lovely Olivia was nothing but a luscious fruit only too willing to fall into his lap. Now the clever Thornhill knew that she, being brought up by that virtuous clergyman, her father, would never sink to any thing base. And so he improved his time visiting the family and winning their approval of him as a husband for their daughter. While they weren't looking, he kept busy winning her heart. Finally he was sure of her. He persuaded her to elope. They would be secretly married, so he said. He even brought forth a popish priest to perform the ceremony. And that night, as she thought he had a marital right to do, he took her. But, the next morning, he introduced her to two other ladies whom he said he had also "married" under the hands of the fake priest. These young ladies were, shall we say, his concubines and very happy at that. Thornhill suggested that his new bride enter into the same satisfied state. Olivia tried because she loved her "husband". But it was that love which undid her. Her unhappiness made her peevish, and Thornhill tried to give her away to a young baronet. This incensed Olivia beyond imagination. She left in a fury, and later returned to her parents.

Here, then, is a new type of villain. All three so far have wanted the same thing. All have made more or less successful attempts to get it. All have been more or less brutal and more or less cunning. And yet all were different in some little way. You might say the way lies in the difference of the reasons for their villainy and the warmth of their hearts. Squire B. deep down inside of himself loved Pamela too much to actually accomplish the business of ruining her. Robert Lovelace also really loved Clarissa, but the desire for revenge was too strong in him to spare her agony. He wanted to make her suffer first. Thornhill was prompted by no feelings of love whatsoever. I can't give his reason even the warm name of animal desire. He enjoyed the amusement of the game of fooling the vicar. It tickled his vanity to have another pretty girl fall prey to his charms. He was bored by his other mistresses and wanted the pleasure of having a new one. His villainy was dignified by nothing---love or passion. He then is the lowest type of villain we have had so far.

This sort of thing goes on in the novel most of the time. In Lewis' "The Monk", the monk, Ambrosio, who was originally a pious religieuse, became a sad victim of sex. Blifil in "Tom Jones" had designs on a girl, too. Sir Hargrave Pollexfen in "Sir Charles Grandison" went after Miss Byron in orthodox manner with coach and all. He was a proper villain quite ready to fight in gentlemanly fashion for his

unlawful rights. In other words, the villainy of all these men was desire of women. Why, did I tell you Signor Montoni married Madame Cheron and then worried her to death; and all the while he was persecuting her niece Emily. And just to be funny about it all, poor, innocent Joseph Andrews in Fieldings' novel, "Joseph Andrews" was almost led astray by Squire Booby's sister, Lady Booby. Young Jo, however, was as virtuous as his sister, Pamela.

There is reason for including in my list of Eighteenth century villains Jane Austen's George Wickham of "Pride and Prejudice"---not so much for his giving a false account of Elizabeth as for his running off with Lydia. His mean spiritedness and the fact that he was an unprincipled adventurer almost made him realistic in the sense that he had broken actual rules of decent conduct; but his commonplace elopement with young Lydia relegates him to that hopeless group of utterly "conventional" villains.

Of an even more "conventionally" villainous type is John Willoughby in Austen's "Sense and Sensibility". This young man finds it pleasurable to lead the innocent Marianne on to hopes of marriage following their summer flirtation--and then just as she is at the height of happy expectation, he goes to London to marry an heiress.

Both of these young men are little more than inanimate stereotypes, drawn exactly to scale, according to the rule of the day. I do not mean to disparage Miss Austen in anyway by

saying this. All the rest of her work convinces us that she was never unconscious of what she was doing. These two young men, Wickham and Willoughby, were to her delightful exercises. Since her public seemed to enjoy imaginary villains she would create a pair for her own amusement, and dashed them off with her usual skillful charm.

Horace Walpole in his "Castle of Otranto" has a lecherous old man pursue the widow-~~bride~~ of his own son through subterranean vaults with the usual idea in the back of his head. This senile fiend isn't above murder to win what he wants.

When I had my theory formulated concerning the predominant sin in Eighteenth century novels, a comparatively small handful of books appeared to either embarrass me by spoiling my proof or make it stronger by being the exceptions to prove the rule. Because of the really small handful that it was, I took the latter decision. The novelists are Defoe, Smollett, Maria Edgeworth, and William Godwin.

Defoe had a fascinating habit of making his heroes villainous. Hence although we know Roxana, Moll Flanders, Captain Singleton, and Colonel Jack have broken laws of various types, yet we are forced through constant association with them to feel a begrudging affection for them. Furthermore, he honestly deserves the title "realist" for his novels actually use the code of the day. The underworld contained prostitutes, pick-pockets, and pirates. Moll and Roxana were prostitutes, Colonel Jack was a pick pocket, and Captain Singleton was a

pirate. Each one at the end of his or her book repents before dying or marrying. That last is probably a sales point to appeal to the Methodists who were becoming so numerous at that time.

Smollett followed Defoe's plan in his "Peregrine Pickle" and "Ferdinand, Count Fathom". Here is a pair of roguish scoundrels if I ever saw them. They cheated. They actually were out of harmony with mankind, made every attempt to better themselves at the expense of their fellow man, and succumbed gladly to all their luxurious desires. In other words, they committed the crimes of an actual Eighteenth century villain and the sins of a philosophical one. They could hardly have been much worse or much more in keeping with the villainous code of their times.

There is always the question in reference to Smollett as there was in reference to Defoe--did he mean his characters to be villains? If you think he did, then you have to come to the conclusion that he had no heroes. "Roderick Random" is a story written about a selfish and unprincipled boy called Roderick Random. His life is a series of adventures of the wildest type as he is misled by London rogues and pressed into the British navy. There are sieges and smugglers and a very pretty woman. He leaves the navy to join the army, and more fighting follows. Feeling the want of money, he tries gambling. This also fails; so he returns to the navy as ship's surgeon,

meets his wealthy father, and returns to England to marry the Narcissa, his first love. I end the account as I started it--it is a story written about a selfish and unprincipled boy. Roderick was the hero of the story, or rather, the story was written about him. Yet, he certainly was not heroic.

Another of Smollett's novels is "Peregrine Pickle". Peregrine is an utter rogue and has the most impossible adventures imaginable on the continent and in England. He fights a duel, he goes to prison, he cheats doctors, he hoaxes the public. Finally he inherits a fortune and marries the lady of his heart whom he has been trying to seduce. Again--the main character is hardly a hero.

Worst of all was Ferdinand in "Ferdinand, Count Fathom". First he was the son of a harlot and no count at all. When a German nobleman was kind to him and brought him up as one of the family, he tried to persuade the daughter to elope. That failed, so he robbed the Count. That is only the beginning. All the remaining pages of the book are given to his thefts, frauds, and seductions. In the end, he repents.

Here are three completely realistic villains. Their sins are not at all stereotyped or fashionable. Even their seductions become only one of a long list of crimes. Because of their realism, I cannot use these characters in my thesis. But that is not the only reason I cannot. Standing in my way is also that question I asked a while back--did Smollett intend these characters to be villains? After reading his

work I felt that Smollett had one outstanding purpose--to shock his readers and in so doing, amuse himself. To shock, to startle, to amuse---and the means did not matter.

Maria Edgeworth was a didactic novelist--of the sort that we of this day would expect that period to abound in. Even her regular novels of fashionable life are instructions in morals. Profligates and fatuous beaux smirched the pages in true Eighteenth Century style,-- but they were there to teach, not to amuse; and my essay purports to show that the Eighteenth Century villain was not drawn for didactic purposes. Miss Edgeworth is more famous for her Irish novels, "Castle Rackrent", "The Absentee", and "Ormond". She realized that there was no justice for the Irish tenant who was mistreated in every possible way by his selfish, wastrel landlord. The Irish landlord was usually absent from his estates, travelling in England and on the Continent, living in a manner befitting nobility. At home his peasant tenants struggled and starved to produce the money for his pleasure. Miss Edgeworth felt someone should try to help this down-trodden group and did her bit by writing the three above mentioned novels telling the world clearly and realistically that it was being unfair to its fellow man.

William Godwin wrote one novel in particular which has come down to this day with its power unweakened. I refer to "Caleb Williams", another didactic novel. In part, it preaches against the overbearing landlord and his tyranny. In part it bewails the relentlessness of revenge. And all in all, it

shows the cruelty of the powerful over the weak. This sort of thing is popular and common nowadays, but in the Eighteenth Century, as I have been showing, and especially in the type of novels I have been studying, the didactic and problem novel has little place. It has little place, but that it actually appeared occasionally proves that it could have had an important position in the Eighteenth Century. And that it could have and didn't is just one more proof of my belief that the novel was not really intended to ^{do} more than amuse--in spite of the impressive and virtuous prefaces.

There is one other single novel that I'd like to mention--"Jonathan Wild" by Fielding. This was based on the life of an actual London thief--or rather, a king of thieves, who was so notorious as to be well known even in this day. He cheerfully broke the laws of God, and state, and philosophers. We grant Fielding exaggerated him for possible purposes of satire; yet even the exaggeration doesn't offset the reality enough to save him for my list of unrealistic villains and put him in my thesis.

So there were some novels which were realistic. There were some novels which had plots or characters which were based on the actual problems of the day, on the actual crimes as so named by law, philosophy, and fashion. But they were in the minority. The majority of the novels had nothing to do with the common, everyday crimes and sins. The majority

of the novels followed one artificial trail. And that being true, the small group of novels which I have just been discussing do not belong in this paper.

The villains in the drama were not of quite the same type as those of the novel. In Cibber's "Love's Last Shift" you will remember there is one known as Loveless. His fault lies in the fact that eight years ago he deserted a worthy wife. During those eight years, he has been wandering all over Europe enjoying himself, and now he has returned home practically penniless. He shows no sorrow at being told that his wife is dead. Later when a serving man comes to tell him that his mistress would like a rendezvous with him, he goes willingly. He enjoyed the supper this unknown woman left for him and became her lover for the night. I suppose that is quite a catalogue of faults. In a novel, Loveless would disgust us at the very least, and quite possibly seem repulsive. Yet in this play, we somehow are not very much excited by his crimes. He is a wife deserter, a loafer, and a roué. Possibly the fact that Loveless himself is uninterested in his faults leaves us cold. The man puts absolutely no life into even his sins. Hence we can't put enough life into our condemnation to give even his sins a type name. Sir Novelty Fashion in the same play is also a rake, and a conceited one to boot. What seems worse than his rakishness is his coarse language and his completely ungentlemanly attitude towards ladies. Our one regret is that he gets off free.

In another play of Cibber, "The Careless Husband", we have Sir Charles Easy who is neglecting his wife. He is doing better than that. He is neglecting his mistress, too, for another lady. And then he grows tired of her. It's all very immoral. Please understand that and be thoroughly impressed or depressed by the wickedness of this renegade. Naturally he has a fop trailing him around, one Lord Foppington, who shares a character similar to Sir Novelty Fashions.

On a more sober strain, we have Addison's "Cato". Addison takes this very seriously, and so do we in consequence. Sempronius is the cad, made that way because Cato will not give him the lovely Marcia. He will take revenge. From then on, the action results entirely from a man's fury at not being given the girl he has set his heart on. The crimes were almost Shakespearean, but the reason for the crimes was the favorite literary one of Addison's day--desire for woman.

"The London Merchant" by George Lillo has become famous because it was written about the lower middle class of society, and by that means almost fails to qualify as typical Eighteenth century literary material. It almost fails to qualify for this thesis because George Barnwell murdered his uncle. But it didn't fail because all action was caused by a lust for a prostitute--a weak, slobbering lust, but an actual one.

Edward Moore wrote a little tragedy called "The Gamester" in which a vile cad, Stukely, wins away the fortune, family jewels, and almost the uncle's estate from a weak gambler.

Poor Beverley, the gambler, is even persuaded to gamble away his wife's jewels and his sister's estate for the rotten Stukely. For he really believes that Stukely is his friend. Stukely poisons his mind against his real friend, his sister's fiance and tries to win over Mrs. Beverley. That is the kind of a man Stukely is. Here is an occasion where the villain wants the girl more than anything else in the world, but is willing to commit any number of crimes first to clear the way for his final gain. Here is a case of breaking the law of friendship, the oldest law known to man. Supposedly it is all in the cause of woman, but we can't help feeling that this villain would have been just as wicked for money alone as he was for money and the hope of a woman.

John Home also wrote a tragedy, "Douglas", in which an Elizabethan sort of a villain plans to steal his kinsman's wife and in the end only persuades his kinsman to kill the wife's son; terribly melodramatic. The villain is a dastardly creature. But boil it down, and you can only say that it is a crime done because of a man's wanting a woman.

Last of all, I do want to remind you of the type of play like "The Duenna" by Sheridan. The villain in this was a father who didn't want his daughter to marry the man of her choice. He had another man chosen for her. He does the violent father act up and down the stage until he is tricked into believing his daughter has consented to seeing things

his way. Then he gives consent to a marriage, although not the one he thinks.

That is enough example of the kind of sins committed by Eighteenth Century villains, I think. You soon discover that if I list more, I list only the same kind over and over again. Once in a great while as I pointed out, you find an Eighteenth Century villain an honest-to-goodness thief. But that is rare. He is more apt to partake of some knavery which is more a sleight of hand that is anything so common as stealing. Once in a while he kills. But when he does this, he usually does it under the costume of another country or of another age. Bloody killing was out of style. Killing in a rage was passé. One killed, if one had to, quietly and for a purpose. And surely there was always a better way, so they figured. The Eighteenth century man enjoyed a swindle. That was fun and quite correct for gentlemanly villain to do. He might play fast, loose, and fancy free with the ladies. That was stylish. In fact, that was often the mark of an accomplished gentleman--to be such a rake. But if he were a real, low-down villain, if he committed the usual crime of the century, he tricked, waylaid, and seduced or attempted to seduce some very fine lady. The more innocent the lady, the more apt the villain was to want her.

If all we knew of the Eighteenth Century was what the novels and plays tell us, we might well ask ourselves now exactly what does all this prove? Does it mean that the

most common form of wickedness of the century was connected with women? Or does it mean that Eighteenth century men and women didn't enjoy a novel or a play unless it resembled a True-Confessions excerpt? Or does it mean that nothing else was considered really sinful?

As it is, we know very well that it wasn't the most common form of wickedness of that era. We know that much else was considered sinful, criminal and immoral. Crime records, tracts by moral philosophers, letters, and periodicals of fashionable manners and ethics tell us so. Then there must be another answer. But let us wait just a few more pages until I have completely finished with my villains before we look at that answer.

Chapter VI After Crime, What Then?

It is all very well to say what villains looked like and what they did; but you haven't told the whole story until you have told what happened to them. Because until we see what the Eighteenth Century did to the^m, we don't really know what they thought of them. So let us take a look at a few of the ends of a few of our favorite villains.

Squire B. married the girl. Yes, he did, and I'm not sure that that wasn't a fitting punishment for him. After chasing her from cellar to attic all over the county, he realized he couldn't live without her. And so in very honorable fashion,

he proposed and married her in a nearby church. And therein is the proper, sentimental ending of any story. The influence of a good woman can work wonders. The lion lies down with the lamb. It teaches all little girls to hang on to their most valuable possession (but don't hide it from sight) and it will tame the fierce beast in any man (and win you a wedding ring). Love conquers all. Love purifies all. Very beautiful.

Robert Lovelace was heartbroken over the death of Clarissa whom you know he loved. So he got engaged in a duel and let himself be killed. That also is a pretty ending from which we may draw a few conclusions. Crime does not pay. Even if the world would let you off, your own conscience won't. Furthermore, what is life without the woman you love? It may be fun to take out your rotten disposition on her when she is alive; but nothing is any fun any more, life isn't worth living, after she is dead.

In the "Vicar of Wakefield", Squire Thornhill had unknowingly been legally married to Olivia, and had to live with her for the rest of his life with her taking complete charge of the money. I think this was intended not so much to punish the villain as to give the story an ending which was morally happy. In spite of all their apparent levity, the Eighteenth Century folk had great respect for the holy state of matrimony as Pamela told us.

To sum up the state of things in the novels, the villains

had very little choice in the matter. They could become honest men, and marry the women, and live happily ever after. Or they could die of grief and repentance. Or they could get killed in some sort of fight. It was even possible in Gothic novels for the villains to go mad. The villain never actually won out. He either had to give up his villainy, his life, his fortune, or his sanity. And the favorite style was for him to repent his wickedness and be joyfully accepted by his formerly wronged lady. Some may believe this was a happy fate--but when you realize it meant the man had to give up the life he liked, you must admit he lost out here, too.

In the drama, there was a nearly stock ending for most villains. Most frequently, they repented. Sometimes they were influenced by the love of a good woman. Sometimes they merely realized the error of their ways and became better on their own. Loveless in "Love's Last Shift" fell in love with his wife and returned to her---enjoying her kindly forgiveness and her satisfactory fortune. More than that, he now had the chance to perform fine deeds of generosity with her money. The transformation was complete. From now on he would be faithful and noble---it says here. Sir Charles Easy, also, returned to his wife. The fact that his mistresses now bored him has nothing whatsoever to do with the question, and only low-minded cynics could think otherwise.

"Cato's" Sempronius was killed in battle, killed by the very man whose uniform he wears as a disguise. That poor brainless

wonder, George Barnwell, went to the gallows. But, and this is the uplifting part of the whole affair, he goes light of spirits, because he had repented of his sins. The old couple in the "Fatal Curiosity" who had killed their son committed suicide. That is to say, the old man killed his wife, and then killed himself in the same repentent mood. He laments that he did not know the boy was his son; else he would not have killed him. A very good old man indeed. Just the kind the country needs more of--he kills only other men's sons. Beverley in "The Gamester" takes poison. And he too repents of his bad ways, and dies peacefully. It's customary to die peacefully. It's moral to die peacefully.

There is another type of ending--Don Jerome in "The Duenna" gives in and bestows his blessings on his children when they marry against his will. Most of the fathers did this.

And so we have come to the end. There is nothing left to do but to gather together our many discoveries and draw a conclusion.

Chapter VII Conclusion

Eighteenth Century literary villains were better than average looking young men. They dressed well, had money in their pockets, and frequented the best spots in town. The very nicest people knew them and like them. The very nicest mothers considered them as husbands for their daughters.

In other words, the villain was a member of the best society and one of the most popular and decorative members of this society. He was not a university man, to be sure, but he was as intellectual as any in his set. His language was in style.

Was this realistic? It could have been, yes! Those who broke only the laws of moral philosophy could have been in possession of all these good qualities. It isn't impossible. Yet, they need not have had them. They could have been made laughable--they could have been made socially repulsive--it would have taken only a few strokes of the pen. Only to have broken the Chesterfieldian laws of good taste would have won the immediate disapproval of the reader or playgoer.

The villain's sins, for the most part, were of one type only. He was a libertine. He wanted women, or one woman. Of course his sin was worse if he wanted only one woman, because then he was at heart a seducer of some pure and good woman. To mistreat the angels of the weaker sex is naturally the lowest of the low crimes. If he wanted, women in general, anyone who would graciously bestow favors upon him, he usually was lackadaisical about money as well. He could be counted on to be counted on for nothing. He would cheat all and sundry out of their fortunes or pocket money. If he were the type which cheats people out of their money, he might even murder a man. But such acts as these were infrequent.

Was this realism? It was, but only in so far as it went. We know that sexual sins were only one of many popular forms of activity not permitted by law or conscience or good taste. They weren't important enough, as a matter of fact, to rate much condemnation in pamphlet or from pulpit. Therefore we can draw only one conclusion:

Eighteenth Century literature, for the most part, followed a standardized path, a simple unvarying rule. The plot should contain as its most important element the fortune or misfortune of a young woman. Her misfortune should be brought about by one man. One of a few previously-decided fates must befall the young man who has imperilled her happiness or her virtue. And that same young man must be attractive to contemplate. These things must be.

Why? Literature of the non-fiction type was written and read by scholarly male minds. Could they swallow this artificial, ground out triviality? No. They neither could nor did. The fiction of the Eighteenth Century was written for women and young girls. It had to be cut down to fit their minds. It had to be merely attractive and entertaining to hold their attention.

To attract and to entertain--but not to teach. Oh to be sure, most of the novelists wrote impressive prefaces which stated that the author wrote from a purely moral and didactic point of view. After reading a preface, one would be convinced that the next few hundred pages would be of more moral

value than the Bible. But those prefaces were misleading. They were written to give the novel a high tone. The authors hoped to write books which people would buy and put on their parlor tables.

There may be some defunct author who from his shining niche in Heaven is throwing curses on me because I have misunderstood him. For instance, Richardson actually may have believed that he was portraying the only crime in society and that he was teaching a lesson. Richardson's impressions of morality were greatly influenced by serving maids and young girls. He had little real depth. Perhaps there was another, or maybe two other misunderstood souls who wrote with the highest of motives at heart.

But as for the rest, they wanted two things--one, to sell their books and two, to gain any immortality which they could. To gain the first, they had to write on a subject which would entertain maids and women, and there was only one subject they were sure could do that. To gain the second, they wrote those fraudulent prefaces.

That, at any rate, is how I explain to myself the strange unreality of those charming literary villains.

Abstract

It is the popular belief of many men that the literature of an age will tell us both the social customs of that age and how beats the heart of the people. Perhaps as a general rule this is true, but in England in the eighteenth century it wasn't. As proof of this statement, I have attempted and failed to show the crimes and sins of that day by studying the villains in the novels and plays.

England had its breeding spots for crime. There were the city slums where dwelt the dregs of society, which kept alive by slaving in the factories. These people were by necessity the foulest and most depraved humans imaginable. They turned quite naturally to crimes of theft and its companion crimes, murder, kidnapping, black-mail, and others. There were the wealthy areas of town and country where the heartless owners of wealth-producing factories and prosperous country estates lived in luxury on the blood-money squeezed from the lives of the slum dwellers and wretched tenant farmers. There were the highways where roved the highway men and the broad seas where piracy was a thriving business still.

Today it is possible to win the disapprobation of society by sinning against God as well as by breaking the laws of man. In the eighteenth century this was not possible except among the Methodists because it was not in good taste

to have the faith and enthusiasm which religion requires in men. Hence God and religion were rather out of style. Among the intellectual members of society, however, moral philosophy found followers who were devoted in a reasonable and quiet sort of a way. This moral philosophy was divided into several schools, each one trying to show its feelings towards ethics without drawing on the doctrines of Christianity. The most comprehensive conclusion which can be drawn from a study of the schools is that they forbade the individual man to rebel against the prevailing laws of the society he lived in because such a rebellion would disturb the peace of his companions.

Great stress was laid on manners in the eighteenth century. As a matter of fact, it is possible to see that the age cared almost more for its manners than it did for its morals. "The Spectator" laid down the law to the sojourners of the Coffee Shop in that day, while the we of today have the letters of Lord Chesterfield to his son to prove to us how important the elite considered etiquette.

It was perfectly possible, therefore, for the literary men of the day to draw completely realistic villains. These villains could be criminals and break definite laws. They would be repulsive and disgusting to see because of their environment. Or they could be men of high social rank who broke the moral-philosophical code. The latter type of villain could add to his sins by failing to be a perfect

gentleman.

As it happened there were only a very few novelists who portrayed realistic villains. For example, Maria Edgeworth wrote didactic novels to improve the condition of the tenant-farmers in Ireland. Daniel Defoe wrote entire books about men and women who committed the actual and most popular crimes of the day. There were a few others, of course, but only a very few in comparison with the large number of novelists and playwrights who made fanciful villains commit the interesting sin of seducing women. These seducers were usually charming gentlemen of the upper classes, dressing in the height of fashion, comporting themselves with perfect decorum, and winning the favor of all who knew them. Some of them succeeded in their evil intents. Some failed. All either repented and were rewarded for their repentance or repented and died. Anyway you look at it, the situation was highly improbable.

Oddly enough, the novelists often wrote serious prefaces pointing out the didactic purpose and high moral tone of the book they had just written. On the other hand, that is not so odd when you remember that these prefaces were the only way the authors could give dignity to a form of literature which was not as yet respected. The novel was so young that only girls and women read it. Men were above such an insignificant form of amusement. Since only girls and women read it, their tastes had to be respected. Therefore,

we see the highly attractive villain playing with woman's
favorite interest, love. Q.E.D.

Edgeworth, Maria New York	Castle Rackrent E.P.Dutton & Co.	1929
Edgeworth, Maria New York	The Absentee E.P.Dutton & CO.	1929
Fielding, Henry New York	Tom Jones A.L.Burt Co.	
Fielding, Henry London	The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great The Navarre Soc. Ltd.	1939
Goldsmith, Oliver New York	The Vicar or Wakefield E.P.Dutton & Co.	1936
Godwin, William New York	The Adventures of Caleb Williams Greenberg Publishing Co.	1926
Lewis, M.G. London	The Monk G.Routledge & Sons	1928
Radcliffe, Ann London	The Mysteries of Udolpho G.Routledge & Sons	1929
Richardson, Samuel New York	Pamela E.P.Dutton & CO.	1936
Richardson, Samuel New York	Clarissa A.L.Burt Co.	1902
Richardson, Samuel London	Sir Charles Grandison G.Routledge & Sons	1902
Smollett, Tobias London	Roderick Random G.Bell & Sons	1925
Smollett, Tobias London	Ferdinand Count Fathom G.Routledge & Sons	1926
Smollett, Tobias London	Peregrine Pickle G. Bell & Sons	1924
Eighteenth Century Plays selected by John Hampden		
New York	E.P.Dutton	

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